

POWER OUTAGE

What to do with frozen breastmilk when the power goes out



1 Prepare for an expected power outage

Consider what you can do ahead of time to store your breastmilk safely in an emergency. Obtain gel packs. Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased to keep your refrigerator as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time.



2 Use ice and/or dry ice to keep your fridge and freezer cold

Refrigerators and freezers that lack power can still function as old-fashioned “iceboxes” that use ice instead of electricity to keep food chilled. Use coolers with ice and gel packs. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot full freezer for 2 days.



3 Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible

A refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if the door is kept closed. A full freezer will hold its temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if half-full). When your freezer is not full, keep items close together and fill the empty space with grocery bags loosely filled with newspaper—this helps the food stay cold longer.



4 The food may still be safe to use if ice crystals remain.

To determine the safety of foods when the power goes on, check their condition and temperature. If food is partly frozen, still has ice crystals, or is as cold as if it were in a refrigerator (40 °F), it is safe to refreeze or use. It's not necessary to pasteurize raw foods before refreezing.